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ABSTRACT

After an analysis of the changing numbers of Americans studying Chinese abroad and of Sino-American academic exchanges after the Tiananmen events of 1989, this paper reports on visits to summer language programs. Enrollments were down by 13 percent between the summer of 1988 and 1989, but down by 50 percent between 1989 and 1990. The following programs are described: the Taipei Language Institute in Taiwan; the Chinese University of Hong Kong; and eight university-related programs in the People's Republic of China (PRC). At each site information was solicited on the numbers and types of students, career goals, level of language study, reasons for selecting the program of choice, etc. Not all information was obtained at all sites. It is noted that the quality of the language training offered is the least important issue to be considered, and that a more significant one is the degree to which the overseas program is compatible with the students' home program. It is concluded that the increase in the number of students studying Chinese abroad in the summer has resulted in an affluence of short-term programs about which insufficient information is available. Most students do not have adequate knowledge about the suitability of the various programs to their personal needs. The importance of informing new or rekindled overseas programs about American needs is emphasized. (LB)

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CHINESE LANGUAGE STUDY ABROAD IN THE SUMMER

1990

FINAL REPORT

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CHINESE LANGUAGE STUDY ABROAD IN THE SUMMER 1990

Richard T. Thompson

INTRODUCTION

In the summer and fall of 1988, as I began to design a research project to determine where Americans study Chinese abroad, I could not have predicted the events that subsequently unfolded in China during the spring and summer of 1989, nor the substantial implications these events would have for my research during the summer of 1990, or their consequences for Sino-American academic exchanges.

Student responses during the summer of 1990 to whether the events of Tiananmen played some role in their decision to study at their current program was a resounding negative. Surprisingly, only a handful of students said they had deferred their study in China to the following summer, and even fewer stated that those events attracted them to China at that time -- the former due to last minute cancellation of program or parental pressure and the latter the sheer historical significance of the event and to be part of the promise of what might follow.

Where have all the students gone? This remains the question that has surprised and confounded me most. My initial assumption -- that the students in the pipeline (and that there is a pipeline) either transferred last summer to other programs or deferred their study -- does not seem be borne out by the facts.

I considered the following possibilities. Students who did not study in China in 1989 either transferred to a program in Taiwan or Hong Kong, attended an intensive program in the States, such as Middlebury or Indiana, or deferred their study for a year. A worst case scenario, and one that I was not willing to seriously consider, was that many students simply chose to leave the field, or equivalently, not enter it.

I site-visited programs in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), talking with program directors, visiting classes and meeting with students. I also collected comparative enrollment data for 1988, 1989 and 1990. My expectation that enrollments for 1989 would be up in Taiwan and Hong Kong was only partially met and my expectation that 1990 would see a return to near 1988 levels, by either a return to 1988 levels in the Peoples Republic or offset by a compensatory increase in Taiwan and Hong Kong, was wide of the mark.

According to estimates provided by the program directors at the programs that I visited, enrollments were off as much as sixty percent. When I returned to the States, I consulted several domestic summer programs, assuming enrollments would be up; i.e., the dislocated students would be here. Let me use Middlebury as perhaps a typical example. I requested comparative enrollment data for '88, 89' and '90. Figures for these years were 109 (88), 101 (89), and 99 (90) -- no measurable change. Application data did not help either 188 (88), 184 (89), and 171 (90). What I quickly realized, of course, is that enrollments are capped at Middlebury.

I suspected that the answer to my question lay elsewhere, in the number of enquiries, and to my surprise and delight Middlebury was able to produce those figures for me. 507 (88), 464 (89), but only 366 in 1990. This represented a decline in interest from the base year of 1988 to the summer of 1990 of 28 percent.

During the summer of 1989 all but a couple of programs in China were either canceled or new sites sought in Taiwan or Hong Kong, if possible. At that late date most of the students were unable to be accommodated by programs in Taiwan, many of which were already operating at capacity as well.

BACKGROUND

The East Asia area interest group session of the meeting of the Directors of the USED-funded National Resource Centers, which took place in Washington, DC in October of 1988, discussed the need for more information on the availability and nature of overseas language training programs in the PRC for the study of the Chinese language. The sense of the meeting was that more and better information is needed about the training opportunities for American students wishing to advance their knowledge of the Chinese language through study abroad.

Before the normalization of relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China in 1979, the study of Chinese abroad was limited mainly to Taiwan and Hong Kong. The response to normalization was positively received by the academic community as well as the many students of the Chinese language in

this country who wished for the opportunity to further their study at the advanced level in China.

With normalization, the governments and higher education communities in both countries joined hands to facilitate, encourage and finance many of the subsequent exchange activities that flourished. For a time, the most popular academic venture was to sign a memorandum of understanding with the People's Republic of China and dispatch and welcome delegations of educators in various disciplines all with the common goal of establishing inter-institutional affiliations and cooperation between our two countries and peoples.

There are literally hundreds of agreements and exchange programs, many either wholly language or language-related. As these cooperative efforts blossomed and grew, it became obvious that we had created an embarrassment of riches and indeterminacy. From the relatively simple task of deciding whether one wished to enroll at one of but a few institutions in Taiwan or Hong Kong, the choice had taken on perplexing proportions. Students at institutions with privately negotiated programs of Chinese language study were, from one point of view, in better shape; the choice was made for them. From another point of view, however, they were disadvantaged, since the students and faculty gained little or no experience with other programs. As the faculty began to share information at the annual meetings of the professional associations they began to harbor doubts.

They were discovering that the arrangements they had made were less suitable to their needs. They observed that some of their colleagues at other institutions appeared to have established programs more relevant to the needs of their students, and they almost always questioned the quality of language instruction. In my view much of this was part of "the grass is always greener on the other side of the street" syndrome. What was interesting to observe was that the students, for the most part, stated that they attended their particular program because "this is where our advisor sends us" or "I had a friend who studied here." Faculty advisors and students, with few exceptions, were not making decisions based upon a comparative examination of what turns out to be a fairly broad spectrum of programs in Taiwan, the PRC and Hong Kong.

ITINERARY

Identification of current programs of language study in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong was accomplished by searching three data bases, as well as through personal communication with individuals experienced in international exchange with China. The data bases were found in the U.S. Department of Education (which has lists of all approved programs of study of the Chinese language utilized by institutions receiving Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships overseas, the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China (CSC/PRC) of the National Academy of

Sciences, and the Education Division of the Chinese Embassy (see also Bibliography).

It should be pointed out that the data bases I examined, as I initiated my study, became moot after the events of June 4. Of the programs I site-visited in the PRC, only one carried out its program of study more or less as planned during the summer of 1989, and many of the programs that had operated language programs during the summer prior to 1989 either discontinued or were forced to seriously curtail their programs in 1990, primarily due to what now appears to be a dramatic falling off of student interest in China studies.

Although the primary area of interest as expressed by the East Asian Center Directors (that is, the area about which they had the least information) was mainland China, I determined that I would include Hong Kong and Taiwan in my subsequent survey. In light of the events of the summer of 1989 this turned out to be serendipitous. In the first place, no one knew whether future programs in the PRC would operate at all or, if so, when. Secondly, if an alternative site were needed, what options were there?

I was able to develop a detailed itinerary for both Taiwan and Hong Kong and adhere to it. However, I found it impossible to schedule my internal travel in China prior to departure and previous experience in China persuaded me that such travel, once scheduled, would be difficult to change and still maintain some semblance of a schedule. I therefore arrived in China with some

sites still only generally identified and with approximate dates established. I canceled tentatively scheduled visits to Xi'an, Changchun, and Hangzhou because I could not verify the presence of a previously scheduled program there.

I planned to visit only those programs that, in my view, would constitute intensive programs of advanced language study during the summer. By this I meant programs in which students from the major language and area studies centers and programs in this country would wish to send their students to significantly advance their knowledge of the Chinese language through an intensive summer study program. I may not have always succeeded. Furthermore, I am sure there were, and are, other programs which would meet these rigid requirements, which I inadvertently overlooked, and I apologize for any such oversights. In addition, I visited or contacted by phone or through private meetings the directors of about a dozen other programs which I have not included in this report either because they are not open to the general public, such as the Dartmouth program in Beijing, are limited to high school students (not the purpose of my study), or because it was clear that the program was not designed to meet the needs as defined above. I visited the Hopkins/Nanjing program since they were considering the establishment of a summer program which would have been open to the general public. Since they have recently decided against setting up a summer program I have not included any report of this visit.

SUMMER LANGUAGE PROGRAMS VISITED

Taiwan:

Taipei Language Institute
University of Pennsylvania at IUP (Stanford Center)
Mandarin Training Center
CET at Chinese Culture University (Yangmingshan)
Mandarin Daily News Language Center
U. of Mass. at Tunghai University

Hong Kong:

Chinese University of Hong Kong

PRC:

Shanghai:

CIEE at Fudan University
FACCE at Shanghai Normal University

Nanjing:

Johns Hopkins at Nanjing

Harbin:

CET at Harbin Institute of Technology

Beijing:

CIEE at Beijing University

U.S. China People's Friendship at Beijing Language Institute

CET at Beijing Foreign Languages Normal College

Tianjin:

Minnesota at Nankai University

PROFILE OF PROGRAMS

At each site I visited I attempted to uniformly collect information that would enable the readers to make informed decisions regarding the suitability of the particular program to

their needs. This includes information on numbers and types of students, career goals, level of language study, reasons for selecting the program of choice, among others. Where appropriate I will include such information in the program descriptions. Where I have not included it the information was not available. Furthermore I have not included information subject to annual fluctuation, such as information on costs and starting dates. At each program I met with the program director as well as the students, and observed several classes, meeting and talking with their teachers where possible. It should be kept in mind that I visited each program at the invitation of the program, and a formal evaluation was not possible. Nevertheless, I was able to form some general conclusions about the quality and nature of the programs in particular and the field in general.

The foremost question often posed by advisors in the home institutions is "How good is the language training?" <u>This is probably the least important question.</u> This is not because good language teaching is not important nor because good and bad language teaching do not exist. Rather, that for the most part, in the programs such as those I visited (organized by universities or organizations in the States, and having varying amounts of experience in teaching Chinese to American students), language teaching was, on the whole, about the same. There is one point of view that all teaching in Taiwan is better than all teaching in the PRC or that the only place to study is program X or Y. This once may have been the case but it is no longer so.

As the experience and practice of teaching Chinese to Americans increases so does the effectiveness of such instruction improve. I might have a personal preference where I would send my students, but I also have my own personal views on what I feel is important in the instructional process, as well as the peculiar needs of my students, and these views can and do vary with the sender. Most programs have good teachers as well as those who could benefit from additional training. To be sure there is a sprinkling of those teachers who probably should seek other avenues of employment, and these can be found in many programs abroad as well as at home.

There are other questions I would rather ask if I were seeking to place my students in a program abroad. I would want to know something about program size, nature of the student body (beginning or advanced, career goals, are they Chinese language or area studies majors at their home institutions), strengths of the program as viewed by the directors, dormitory arrangements, and extracurricular activities, among others. In other words, I would seek a program compatible with my program at home and my students' needs. I have tried to seek out such information about the programs I visited. I may not have been always successful.

TAIWAN

Taipei Language Institute

The Taipei Language Institute (TLI) (main site) is located in downtown Taipei at an easy to reach location. It has facilities in

other parts of the island as well. It appears well organized and staffed with competent teachers.

TLI is by far the largest of all of the Chinese language programs, with an estimated 400-450 American students at its four sites. It is also, by all accounts one of the most flexible programs of study. Private or group instruction can be arranged on short notice on an intensive or non-intensive basis. As a result, a fairly diversified student body can be found here. Although there is no student housing at the Institute's main site, ample housing is available at the YMCA, the International Student Youth Center, or through private home stays.

TLI has a training program for new teachers, a materials development program with an external linguistics consultant advisory group, and extensive and varied extracurricular activities for the students.

The students I met with appeared to be mature, highly motivated, and for the most part were interested in applying Chinese to the world of business. Most of the students I met with rated their Chinese at the intermediate level. They had different personal goals for what they hoped to accomplish in their summer program of study, including the improvement and expansion of vocabulary and sentence structure, as well as the sociolinguistic aspects of the Chinese language. They found the TLI attractive because of the great flexibility and personal involvement in the design of their particular programs.

For information contact:

Dr. Marvin C. Ho, President
Taipei Language Institute
P.O. Box 91-225
Taipei, Taiwan
(02) 341-0022, 363-0988

Penn-in-Taipei

The Penn program is located at the Inter-University Program for Chinese Language Studies in Taipei (Stanford Center) on the large and attractive campus of Taiwan National University. This eight-week program is characterized by a well structured curriculum, and carefully selected students (27) with prior knowledge of the Chinese language.

The program director believes that a certain lack of flexibility in the program is offset by the benefits from a carefully designed and executed curriculum. The focus of the program is the development of oral proficiency. Other strengths of the program include diagnostic evaluation of each student, individual counseling, and an on-going teacher training program. Materials development has long been a strength of the programs at the Center. Although there is no student housing on campus there is ample housing available nearby.

The students I met with were quite mature and all had previous experience with Chinese, a requirement of the program. They rated themselves at the intermediate level in Chinese. Their career goals included medieval Buddhist texts, education, international law, and medicine. The students indicated that they had selected

this program because of the reputation of IUP and because of the emphasis on spoken Chinese.

For information contact:

Dr. Jerome Packard
Oriental Studies
University of Pennsylvania
847 Williams Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19104
(215) 898-7466 or 7470

Inter-University Program for Chinese Language Studies in Taipei (IUP)

This program is generally referred to as the Stanford Center. The program of study is practically identical to the Penn program which Stanford organizes and provides for Penn. There are other details about the program which vary from the Penn program.

For information contact:

Inter-University Program
Institute of International Studies
Littlefield Center, Room 14,
300 Lausen St.
Stanford, CA 94305-5013

Mandarin Training Center (MTC)

The Mandarin Training Center is conveniently located on the campus of National Taiwan Normal University. This eight-week program, which is one of the largest on the island (206 students), provides a four-skills approach and is well established, well organized, and tightly managed. There is an on-going teacher training program as well as an active materials development

program. Students are given a placement test which has both oral and written components. An external advisory group meets periodically to advise on programmatic matters. There are also extracurricular activities organized for the students.

MTC accepts students at all levels, however, most of the students I spoke with rated their Chinese at the intermediate level. Career goals identified by the students included teaching, business, law, engineering and medicine, in that order. One student indicated an interest in film editing and another in Altaic studies.

In response to the question why they chose to study in Taiwan, most responses cited factors such as convenience and ease of application, they feel more comfortable in the society (more Westernized, and less segregated), and their scholarship required it. Many cited ability to earn money as an important consideration. On the more academic side, many students indicated they came to Taiwan because of the excellent reputation of MTC. Other factors included use of traditional characters, better access to library resources in English, and there are students from various parts of the world at MTC which creates an international environment.

For information contact:

Dr. Ye De Ming, Director
Mandarin Training Center
National Taiwan Normal University
162 Hoping East Road, Section 1
Taipei, Taiwan 10610
321-8405

CET at Chinese Culture University (CCU)

The CET Chinese Language Training Center in Taiwan is located on the breathtaking campus of Chinese Culture University in Yangmingshan. It moved to Taiwan from the Mainland in 1989 and is still in the process of setting up a new school. This eight-week program admits collegiate and pre-collegiate students at all levels beginning through advanced.

A significant strength of this program lies in the practicum. The program director has developed a systematic and detailed syllabus to link formal instruction with real world activities. As such, language learning is less text book-dependent and more of an interactional process. Each syllabus is individually styled depending on the needs and goals of each student. Because of the schools location at CCU there are ample opportunities to participate in cultural activities such as music and drama. An additional strength is the opportunity to live on campus in a dormitory with Chinese students. This is one of three such programs that I visited where such housing was available.

I met with all nine students in the program. Two rated themselves at the introductory level while the remaining were at the intermediate to advanced levels in the language. Their career goals included business, law, journalism and teaching in that order. Reasons for coming to Taiwan included advice of parents and advisors, and wanting to concentrate on the traditional characters. A major consideration in selecting this program was the small class

size, the availability of on-campus housing and the responsiveness of CET to their applications.

For information contact:

Mary Jacob
Academic Programs, CET
1110 Washington Street
Lower Mills, Boston, MA 02124
(800) 225-4262

Mandarin Daily News Language Center

This program, like TLI, provides maximum flexibility in the design of programs of study to meet the needs of the students who know what they want. Students are admitted at any level for individual or group study, and for students with previous knowledge of Chinese a placement test of speaking and reading ability is administered. This flexibility makes it easier for students to enroll with little advanced notice. There are currently 48 American students at the school in the summer. There are no dormitory facilities at the Center; however, housing is available on the open market similar to that described for TLI.

The students I met with appeared to know what they needed to study and how to go about organizing it in consultation with the Center. The career goals of the students ranged from business (most students), to teaching, film industry, physics, and computers. Most students rated their Chinese at the beginning level. Reasons for selecting Taiwan as a study site were, as with most programs, varied, and included such reasons as sister exchange program, wanting to learn traditional characters, ability to work

to offset the costs of their study, Taiwan is a good, interesting place to live, the language teaching quality is high, and can make friends with Chinese easily.

The students were pleased with their study at the Center and felt they were making progress toward their personal goals. These goals included increasing conversational ability, expanding both vocabulary and number of characters, and becoming more culturally aware.

For information contact:

Mandarin Daily News Language Center
10 Fuchow Street
Taipei, Taiwan
391-5134

University of Massachusetts at Tunghai University

The University of Massachusetts program is located on the attractive campus of Tunghai University in Taichung, Taiwan, which is located in central Taiwan about 2 hours south of Taipei. This eight-week program is skillfully designed and administered by UM in cooperation with Tunghai faculty and admits other than UM students. The 36 students live on campus in dormitories, with Chinese students when possible.

Although the location of the program in Taichung permits more attention to formal language study, it is less Westernized and there are opportunities for extracurricular activities nearby. Mandarin as well as other dialects are spoken here. The program has a heavy emphasis on communication as well as reading. Upon

arrival the students take a placement examination and there is a minimum entrance requirement of one year of previous study.

The students were quite pleased with their program and felt that they were achieving their goals. They rated themselves at the intermediate level in Chinese. Career goals identified by the students included business (almost half), teaching (a close second), government, medicine, interpretation/translation, and law.

In response to why they had selected Taiwan as a place to study, most students cited use of traditional characters and better teaching methods as the major reasons. Other reasons include lower costs, and ability to earn money. Reasons for selecting this program included ease of application and transfer of credits, high academic standing, and on-campus housing with Chinese room mates. In response to personal goals for their program of study this summer, most students indicated a desire to strengthen their language and cultural skills in Chinese in general. A large number said that they were trying to decide if they wanted to select Chinese as a future major. All were pleased with their program of study and progress.

<u>For information contact:</u>

Laurel Foster-Moore
International Programs
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003
(413)545-2710

HONG KONG:

Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK): New Asia--Yale-In-China Chinese Language Centre

The Centre was founded in 1963 and remains one of the oldest programs of its kind. Located in the New Territories at the very attractive campus of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, this 10-week program is open to students wishing to study either Cantonese or Mandarin and instruction is available at the introductory to the advanced levels in small classes averaging between 4 and 5 students. There is a fixed curriculum; however, advanced students may design a curriculum allowing for his or her interests and needs provided there are sufficient students to make up a class. The number of American students attending in the summer varies from twenty to thirty. In the summer of 1989 there were 50 students from the States, a result of the Duke program having relocated to Hong Kong at that time. Housing is not available on campus.

For students wishing to study Cantonese outside of the PRC this would serve their needs well. Students wishing to study Mandarin, however, should be aware that, although Mandarin is widely spoken in Hong Kong, it is not normally heard on the streets. English is also a very widely spoken language.

For information contact:

Director
New Asia--Yale-in-China Chinese Language Center
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong
0-6952681

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

SHANGHAI

CIEE at Fudan University

Fudan University accommodates up to 70 percent of the foreign students who study in Shanghai, and the CIEE program is but one of several, including high school programs. The University is located on the outskirts of Shanghai and houses the foreign students in a compound which contains class rooms as well as dormitories. There are students from many different countries in the compound which contributes to an international atmosphere in which English often serves as the international language outside of the class room. Chinese are not permitted in the compound, unless they are Fudan students, and they are not permitted in the students' rooms.

The CIEE program seemed well organized with competent staff and faculty, with many activities planned for the students but with little private time. This nine-week program admits students at all levels and has no language prerequisites. Student enrollments dropped considerably from 17 in 1988 (the program was canceled in 1989) to 6 in 1990.

The students I met with rated themselves at the beginning level. Their career goals included international business, law and education with business predominating. Reasons for studying in PRC included ease of application procedures, a less Westernized atmosphere, it is viewed as the real China, and interest because of Tiananmen. Reasons for selecting CIEE include good reputation,

U.S. Government fellowship support, and that CIEE has a business connection.

The students' academic goals for the summer for the most part focused on the overall improvement of their spoken language skills to the extent that they would be able to communicate easily on the street, as well as to come to see first hand what China was like. Some used this period to determine if they would make Chinese studies their career goal. Many indicated that they felt they would not be able to achieve their goals in the short time of the program. I attribute this to unrealistic goals and the fact that they were at the beginning level, and not to the quality of the program.

For information contact:

CIEE, Academic Programs
205 E. 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017
(212)661-1414 ext. 1244

FACCE at Shanghai Normal University

The Foundation for American-Chinese Cultural Exchanges (FACCE) offers an intensive, eight-week language and culture program on the campus of the Shanghai Normal University. The program is open to high school and college students, as well as to others wishing to learn Chinese. Enrollments declined from 20-25 in 1988 to 8 in 1990. The program moved to Taiwan during the summer of 1989 and returned in 1990, but relocated to Shanghai Normal.

The faculty are trained as teachers of Chinese as a foreign language as part of their professional studies at the University. The faculty administer an oral placement interview to those students with prior Chinese language study.

Seven of the students rated themselves at the beginning level with one at the intermediate level. Career goals included education, business and law, journalism, fashion, government service and medicine. Reasons for selecting PRC for study included an interest in how China was dealing with modernization and the post-Tiananmen period, and a desire to learn about the Chinese people and culture.

Reasons for selecting the FACCE program included high profile program with good reputation, information about it was available in students schools, and it accepted beginners. Students reported personal study goals to improve conversation and communication skills, to lay a foundation for further study in the fall semester, and to decide whether or not to major in Chinese studies.

For information contact:

The Foundation for American-Chinese Cultural Exchanges
475 Riverside Drive, suite 245
New York, NY 10115

HARBIN

CET at Harbin Institute of Technology

The CET Harbin Chinese Language Program resides on the campus of the Harbin Institute of Technology in northeast China. Although

the program admits students at all levels, there is a requirement that students have studied two years of the Chinese language, and the program is principally designed for students at the more advanced levels. The program began in 1988 and was one of the few programs not to cancel in the summer of 1989. This summer there were 11 students in the program. This intensive 9-week summer program appears to be well designed and directed and an excellent location for serious language study. Students live in dormitories on campus with Chinese students.

The CET Chinese Language Program, like the other CET programs has an academic advisory board made up of American educators who monitor the administration of the center program. Students are required to submit a 500-750 character essay as well as a five-minute cassette recording of reading the essay in Chinese aloud as part of their applications.

The students rated themselves for the most part at the intermediate to advanced levels. Career goals included business (7), academic teaching (3) with one undecided. In response to why they chose to come to the PRC to study, some students indicated a desire to experience the mystique of Chinese culture and a third world, communist society. Others indicated the attraction of a Chinese room mate. Five of the students indicated that they had deferred their study tour to China last year because of Tiananmen.

In response to personal goals for their summer study, most students listed fairly general goals such as overall improvement of

Chinese speaking ability; others indicated a desire to learn more about Chinese culture or to decide whether to continue on in Chinese studies. One student who had completed two years of Chinese language study in the States indicated that he felt that continued study at his home institution would be detrimental to his Chinese study plan.

For information contact:

Mary Jacob, Academic Programs
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BEIJING

CIEE at Peking University

The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) summer language program at Peking University is an eight-week program of intensive language study coupled with ample cultural and other activities, such as field trips, special lectures and sports programs. This well designed and well directed program has three components; readings in Chinese, conversational Chinese, and listening comprehension.

Two years of college-level Mandarin are a prerequisite and applicants are required to take the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) test. Fourteen students attended in the summer of 1990 (a drop from over 20 in 1988). Incoming students are also required to take a placement examination to test knowledge of characters and listening comprehension. Strengths of the program are considered

to be the quality of the teachers and the presence of more advanced and academically serious students.

The students are housed on the campus of Peking University; however, it is not possible to have a Chinese room mate. Career goals of the students I met with included government/international organizations, business and higher education in that order of preference. All of the students I met with rated their knowledge of Chinese at the intermediate to advanced levels.

Their reasons for studying in the PRC included a belief that the PRC was politically and culturally more interesting, they intend to work here in the future, and it is less expensive. Their reasons for studying at CIEE included such reasons as it was recommended by their school or professor, and there was better information available about the program. Their personal language achievement goals for the summer included increasing their level of sophistication in the language, summer study in preparation for junior year abroad in the fall, and "I studied Chinese for three years in the States and couldn't do anything with it, I came here to learn to speak."

<u>For information contact:</u>

Susan Fox
CIEE
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017
(202) 661-1414

U.S. China People's Friendship at the Beijing Language Institute

This eight-week program is housed at the prestigious Beijing Language Institute (BLI). Enrollments dropped from 20 in 1988 to 6 in 1990. Although the program admits students at all educational levels with or without previous knowledge of the language, the students were predominantly at the beginning level. There is an international atmosphere and the students stay on campus in residence halls for international students.

Career goals included journalism, international development and international business law. Student reasons for studying in the PRC included a desire to study in the real China and a desire to learn the short forms of the characters used on the Mainland. Students goals for the summer program of study focused on the development of survival skills and getting around in Beijing.

For information contact:

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CET at Beijing Foreign Languages Normal College (BFLNC)

This intensive, eight-week CET program is located at the Chinese Language Training Center on the campus of BFLNC. The faculty are, therefore, professionally trained as teachers of Chinese-as-a-second-language. Although students are admitted at all levels, including those without prior study of the Chinese

language, three fourths of the students I met with rated their knowledge of Chinese at the beginning level with the remaining one fourth at the intermediate level. The program enrolled 30 students in the summer of 1988 and although it moved to the Harbin campus in 1989, is back strong in 1990 with just under twenty students. The program of study includes cultural activities in addition to formal, in-class instruction.

Students live in dormitories and eat in the university dining facilities. Although it is not possible to have Chinese room mates, there are four Chinese who live in the dorm and are available to the students for consultation. There is also a library in the dorm.

Fifty percent of the students I met with were planning a career in business with the others divided between medicine, music, journalism and public service. Their reasons for coming to PRC mostly noted a desire to live in the real Chinese culture as well as to visit a third world culture. Other reasons included the historical significance of China and to compare post-Tiananmen reality with reports from the US press. One student said he was there "in place of his brother." One wonders where his brother was sent.

Student reasons for selecting this program included the location of the program in Beijing, prestige dialect is spoken here, and was not aware of other programs. Students' goals in their program of study for the summer were, on the whole, fairly straightforward with modest goals to gain or retain some basic

fluency and to place in second- or third-semester Chinese upon return home in the fall.

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TIANJIN

University of Minnesota at Nankai University

The Minnesota/Nankai Summer Chinese Language Institute is located on the campus of Nankai University in Tianjin, China. This well designed and well directed intensive program is ten weeks in duration and admits students at all educational levels, but requires at least one year of prior Chinese language study. The program enrolled 25 students in 1988, was canceled in 1989, and had 28 students in 1990. The faculty receive training through the regular teaching Chinese-as-a-second-language program at Nankai University. Students live and eat in residence halls on campus but do not have Chinese room mates.

The majority of students in the program I spoke with rated their Chinese language ability at the intermediate level, with a small number at the beginning level. Education was the most popular career goal followed by journalism, business, international relations and banking in that order.

Reasons given for preferring to study in the PRC included a desire to see the real China, fewer foreigners were present, Mandarin is spoken, and they have relatives in the PRC. Reasons for selecting their current program include convenience of application, smaller city, and was recommended by friends or professors.

In response to personal goals for their summer language study, most students indicated a desire to strengthen their speaking and listening skills to be able to converse easily on the street. One student indicated a goal to see how a Chinese teacher in China teaches. As with students elsewhere most felt they were achieving their goals.

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PROFILE OF STUDENTS

I met with students at each of the centers I visited. During these discussions I collected information on their level of Chinese (self-rated), their reasons for studying abroad (Taiwan or the PRC), reasons for selecting the program they were enrolled in and satisfaction with that program, and their career goals.

I found that almost universally, and regardless of their level and program of study, the students were satisfied with the program they selected and with their progress in their study of the Chinese language. The comparatively small number who felt they were not achieving the progress they had hoped for had come to China with little or no prior knowledge of the language. Many students selected their program of study because their home institution recommended it or they had a friend who attended that program. Only in a disconcertingly few cases was the student aware of other programs and made a selection based upon a careful analysis of alternative choices.

Students who selected programs in Taiwan gave the following reasons. Many felt that Taiwan was an authentic Chinese environment but with a more Western orientation and a place in which to more easily make Chinese friends. Ability to earn money by teaching English and thereby offset some or all of the costs of their study abroad was a significant factor for a large number of the students. Many students indicated that they had selected Taiwan because their program of study had been highly recommended not because it was in Taiwan. A large number of students indicated that they chose to study in Taiwan because they wished to pursue study of the traditional characters and because they believed that language teaching was better in Taiwan.

In contrast, students who attended programs in the PRC often indicated as reasons a desire to see the "real China" where there were fewer foreigners, to visit an underdeveloped, third-world

country, and an interest in how China was dealing with modernization and the post-Tiananmen period. More students than I would have suspected indicated that they were using this period of summer study to decide whether or not to pursue Chinese studies at their institutions in the fall. This response correlates with a significantly larger number of students in the PRC who indicated that they were at the beginning level.

I found that, in response to questions about career goals, there were no significant differences between students in the PRC and those in Taiwan. A surprising 39 percent of all students interviewed indicated business as a career goal, followed by those interested in education (defined to include all levels) at 28 percent, 10 percent in law, 6 percent in government/public administration, 5 percent in medicine, and 12 percent other or undecided.

I asked students to rate themselves in their ability in the Chinese language as beginning, intermediate or advanced. I found significant differences in the responses between students in Taiwan and the PRC. 57 percent of the students in the PRC rated their Chinese at the beginning level, while only 36 percent of the students in Taiwan rated their Chinese at this level. Conversely, 59 percent of the students in Taiwan rated their Chinese at the intermediate level, while only 36 percent of those in the PRC did so. I found no real difference at the advanced level with 5 percent so reporting in Taiwan and 7 percent in the PRC. I'm not sure what I expected, but what it shows is that students at the

advanced levels are not normally found in formal language programs. This is probably the way it should be.

I also found that many students in both Taiwan and the PRC said that they selected their program of study because of ease of application and others because of ease of transfer of credit. Neither of these is a sufficient reason for selecting a program of study abroad, especially in China. Institutions must do a better job in assisting students with the application process and in explaining the "transfer of credit" question.

I asked students what goals they had set for themselves to accomplish during their program of study for the summer and whether they felt that they were accomplishing them. Whereas goals varied somewhat, almost all students felt that they were realizing them. The most commonly stated goal was to improve their spoken Chinese so that they could get around and use the language in the streets speaking with Chinese. Many stated goals such as increasing vocabulary and improving their sentence structures as well as the sociolinguistic aspects of the Chinese language and becoming more culturally aware. One student, who had completed two years of study in the States, indicated that he had come to China because he felt that continued study at his institution would be detrimental to his Chinese, while another said that he studied Chinese for three years in the States and couldn't do anything with it. Situations such as this will continue to exist as long as language programs in our colleges and universities fail to define the goals of their courses in terms other than to complete n number of

lessons in the book they have been using for the past twenty years. Course goals must be stated in more general language-use terms so that a student will know what a particular course will enable him or her to do in the language and not that he or she will be able to understand this structure or that vocabulary item.

A common purpose expressed by many was to use this period to decide if they wished to major in Chinese. This struck me as quite a departure from earlier years when students of Chinese went abroad perhaps in their junior year or as advanced graduate students and were already specializing in the language. Now, more and more students are coming to China with little or no prior study of the language and most of this appears to be with private funding and with access increasingly limited to those who can afford it.

CONCLUSIONS

The increase in the number of students studying Chinese abroad in the summer has resulted in the development of an affluence of short term programs to meet the needs of these students. Unfortunately, insufficient information exists about these programs, and most students who study abroad attend programs without the benefit of a comparative examination of the suitability of the various programs to their personal needs. Also, unfortunately, many have not been well briefed on what their needs are and how to best satisfy them. This helps explain the rather indeterminate responses given by most of the students to the question of what they hoped to achieve in their summer study.

There is a common belief held by many that language teaching is better in Taiwan than on the mainland. This conviction is frequently held as a universal opinion regardless of the particular program or the particular teacher. My observations lead me to the judgment that the quality of Chinese language teaching, on the whole, is about the same. As the experience and practice of teaching Chinese to Americans increase so does the quality of instruction improve. Other factors such as the presence of a teacher training component in a program, of course, are important. This is not to say that quality of language teaching is not important or that it may not vary. I believe that it is not the right question.

We should be asking whether a particular program of study abroad is compatible with our program at home and our students needs. We need to better match our students with a program abroad and to do this we need to better understand these needs and ask the directors of programs we are considering whether they believe their program is appropriate for our students. It is possible to identify the more serious programs and to seek out those which address the needs of the more serious students.

Study of the Chinese language abroad during the summer has changed. One decade ago there was a handful of programs in Taiwan and the PRC which primarily catered to the advanced language student from the comprehensive universities. By the spring of 1989 there were literally dozens of programs attracting students at all educational levels from high school to the graduate level, and

at all levels of the study of Chinese from no prior study to the advanced level. Many programs were run by consortiums of U.S. institutions or private organizations, some were institution-to-institution programs not open to the general applicant, while others were organized by the foreign institutions themselves.

In the summer of 1989 this changed profoundly. There was widespread cancellation of programs in the PRC. A small number moved their operations to Taiwan and others tried to place their students in programs in Taiwan or Hong Kong with marginal success. Many seem to have simply disappeared. In the summer of 1990 I could not locate programs I knew to have existed in 1988 and some of the programs I visited in 1990 could not be certain of their continued survival.

Overall decline in the study of Chinese between the summer of 1988 and 1989 was only 13 percent (down 70 percent in the PRC, but also down in Taiwan by 6 percent, and up in Hong Kong by 50 percent). Even though some programs in the PRC moved to Taiwan, enrollments were off. The real surprise came between 1989 and 1990 when enrollments overall declined by nearly 50 percent. Enrollments rose by 130 percent on the mainland (but were still off 30 percent from 1988) while they fell dramatically by 56 percent in Taiwan.

Unofficial figures from the MLA 1986-1990 national survey of registrations in foreign languages at the postsecondary level will show an increase of approximately 12 percent for this four-year period. Unfortunately, it cannot tell us what went on between 1989

and 1990. I compared the 1990 figures with 1986 figures for 12 of the major research universities which traditionally have accounted for the majority of the students and found a drop in enrollments at the undergraduate level of nearly 8 percent but with a surprising rise in enrollment in graduate level courses of over 40 percent.

There is some information which suggests that enrollments domestically in Chinese studies and especially language study fell off significantly in 1989. There appears to be some voluntary suspension, if not withdrawal, of national interest in the study of China and the Chinese language. What is not clear is the long term effect this will have on Chinese studies, and on Chinese language study abroad during the summer.

I surmise that students already committed to a specialization in Chinese studies will continue and will pursue language study in the summer. Programs abroad will offer programs designed to attract these students, although, in the short term, the number of programs will level off or decrease.

This should make the task of selecting a program more appropriate to the students needs easier although no less important. In the long term, as other events crowd the national scene, and the American infatuation with things Chinese rekindles itself, we should see growth. How we participate in the shaping of this growth now will help determine the nature and quality of the programs that survive or newly emerge. If we do not inform these programs about the kind of training we expect, we will have abdicated our responsibilities in this matter.

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